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INFO RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4820
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0675
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 4030
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 3863

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 001299

SIPDIS

CA/FPP FOR JILL NYSTROM, PLEASE PASS TO DHS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KFRD CVIS CMGT ASEC IN

SUBJECT: VALIDATION STUDY OF NEW DELHI'S P3 PERFORMERS

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 0007 (B) NEW DELHI 575 (C) NEW DELHI 619 (D) NEW DELHI 638 (E) CHENNAI 157

¶1. SUMMARY: As one of a series of validation studies (reftels A-D) by Embassy New Delhi, Fraud Prevention personnel undertook a validation of P3 visas issued in FY 2008. Given the size of the groups that often apply for P3 visas, and the concomitant risk of a few "extras" thrown in, we have given these cases additional scrutiny. The study showed an overstay rate of approximately 5%, giving us feedback on our work thus far and ammunition for continued close oversight of these groups. END SUMMARY.

¶2. P3 performing groups that apply at Embassy New Delhi generally range in size from 5-15 performers, many with some prior travel to the U.S. or elsewhere. The size of the groups and variability among the time and experience of their members, leave open the possibility of someone paying for a spot not as a genuine performer, but simply to get the visa. Therefore, the NIV and Fraud Prevention Units have adopted a standard operating procedure whereby such groups submit their passports and supporting documentation in advance. The FPU then will confirm with some of the booked event locations that the performers are expected; call some of the applicants' neighbors to see if they are known as musicians, comedians, etc.; and review the petitioner's history of past travel and whether all applicants have returned.

¶3. In FY 2008 343 total P3 applicants were issued visas. During that period, a total of 817 applicants applied and 56% percent were refused given concerns about their lack of time with the group, lack of travel history, and/or FPU background investigations as noted above. Of those issued, 18 appear to have overstayed their visas, giving an overstay rate of 5.2%. One Tibetan P3 visa holder has claimed asylum.

¶4. Of the 18 noted above, five of six members of a Tibetan performance group (including the one who claimed asylum) are still in the United States. Reftel E reported on concerns about Tibetan applicants for all visa categories. Also worth noting were a group of 21 Tibetan monks, of whom 16 extended their P3 status from an initial expiration of December 2008 to an expiration of December 2009. They were billed as working with an Emory University's Tibet Initiative, that they would give performances, and that the money would go to their monastery.

¶5. Several others were members of groups that had multiple overstays and have now been added to our watch phrase list. Several of those now in the United States had previous travel to the U.S. and/or the UK, something we usually look for in "good" performers. One actually used his P3 properly, but appears to have overstayed a subsequently-issued B1/B2 visa, once his family could go with him. One was not a performer per se, but a practitioner of a sport known as Kabbadi.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The P3 groups continue to give cause for extra scrutiny. Recent "poison pen" letters from some associated with the

Punjabi cultural entertainment industry encouraged our careful review of the groups before their arrival for an interview. We will build our files of those groups who "lose" members and try our best to find the right profile of entertainers whose intentions are merely to perform in the U.S. temporarily. END COMMENT.

BURLEIGH